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Safety Culture

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Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health Division

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF HAWAI'I OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DIVISION

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Shared Commitment

Beyond the bare minimum

As I write this Editor's Note, we are several weeks away from 2026. As I reflect on the work we do in safety and health, I'm reminded that "safety culture" is rarely created by a single policy, a training session, or an inspection.

Instead, it builds slowly through company decisions, the shortcuts we avoid, and the conversations where people feels safe to speak up. Over time, these habits form the invisible structure in the workplace.

Strong safety cultures go beyond just following the "bare minimum." While compliance is the minimum requirement, it is commitment that makes a real difference. When workers feel valued and supported, they view safety as a shared responsibility, not just a duty. When leaders show this same care before any incidents happen, it builds trust in the company that no rule can establish.



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In this issue, you'll find updates and guidance that highlight both the challenges and the opportunities we face in protecting Hawai'i's workforce.

My hope is that these pages encourage each of us to look a little deeper: not just at the hazards in front of us, but at the systems, assumptions, and conversations that shape how we approach them.

Safety isn't just part of the job—it's part of our relationships with one another. And like any relationship, it grows strongest when we choose consistency, curiosity, and compassion day after day.

Mahalo for your commitment to keeping our communities safe.

Edmar Castillo

Compliance Assistance Specialist (Community Outreach)

The opinions expressed in "Editor's Note" do not necessarily reflect those of the agency, department, or affiliated.

Preventing Workplace Incidents Starts with Employers



Recent data and case reviews have shown a concerning uptick in workplace incidents across a range of industries in Hawai'i. These incidents are more than numbers on a report. They represent real people, families, and communities affected by harm that is often entirely preventable.

At HIOSH, we continue to emphasize one central truth:

Prevention Begins at the Top.

Employers set the foundation for workplace safety. Their choices—how they plan, communicate, train, and lead—directly influence whether employees return home safely each day.

A strong safety and health program is not just regulatory compliance; it is an investment in Hawai'i's workforce, economy, and community.



RANDAL TIU,
Administration and Technical
Support Manager

For more information on creating workplace safety culture, go to <https://labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/shms/>

To support local employers, HIOSH encourages organizations to adopt or strengthen the core elements of **effective Safety and Health Management Systems (SHMS)**, as recognized by OSHA and supported by Hawai'i's regulatory framework.

What Employers Can Do Today to strengthen their safety culture and reduce preventable incidents

1. Establish a Written Safety and Health Program

- A written, accessible program sets expectations and provides structure. It should include clearly defined responsibilities, safe work procedures, emergency and medical response plans, and methods for reporting hazards.

- OSHA's Safe + Sound Program offers free templates, checklists, and planning guides that employers in Hawai'i can adapt to their work environments.

2. Conduct Routine Job Hazard Analyses (JHAs)

- Every task carries its own risks. By analyzing tasks step-by-step – before employees begin work – employers can identify and address hazards through elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, or PPE.
- This proactive approach helps reduce incidents related to equipment use, chemical exposure, confined spaces, heat stress, and more.



3. Train and Empower Employees

- Training must be continuous – not a one-time event. Workers should receive instruction on hazard recognition, equipment operation, emergency procedures, site-specific requirements, and their right to report unsafe conditions. New hires, temporary workers, and contractors must be included.
- Empower employees to stop work when conditions become unsafe. A well-trained workforce is one of the strongest defenses against workplace injury.

4. Encourage Open Communication and Worker Participation

- A successful safety culture depends on trust. Workers must feel comfortable reporting hazards, near-misses, or process concerns without fear of retaliation. Employers are encouraged to use safety committees, suggestion systems, tailgate meetings, or anonymous reporting tools.

- Frontline workers often hold the most practical insight into day-to-day hazards. Their involvement leads to better controls and more sustainable safety solutions.

“Every effort we make today is an investment in Hawai‘i’s workforce, economy, and community.”

5. Lead by Example

- Safety leadership begins with consistent actions. When employers and supervisors follow procedures, wear PPE, conduct inspections, and demonstrate accountability, safety becomes a shared value – not just a policy on paper.
- Leadership behavior directly influences compliance and morale across the workforce.

Moving Forward: Safety is a Shared Responsibility

Preventing workplace incidents requires commitment, consistency, and a willingness to improve. HIOSH encourages employers to regularly evaluate their safety programs, learn from near-misses and past incidents, and seek assistance when needed.

Free consultation services, outreach resources, and training opportunities are available to help businesses build safer workplaces.

Together, we can strengthen Hawai‘i’s safety culture and ensure that every worker – across every island – returns home healthy and unharmed at the end of each day.

SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

For more information on instituting and maintaining an effective workplace safety and health culture visit the HIOSH website:

labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/shms/



Stronger Together

Join the HIOSH's Alliance



Educate our local communities together

Community leaders helping their communities is what alliance is all about. As a HIOSH Alliance, you will:

- Connect with community peers
- Sharpen your safety skills
- Give back to your community



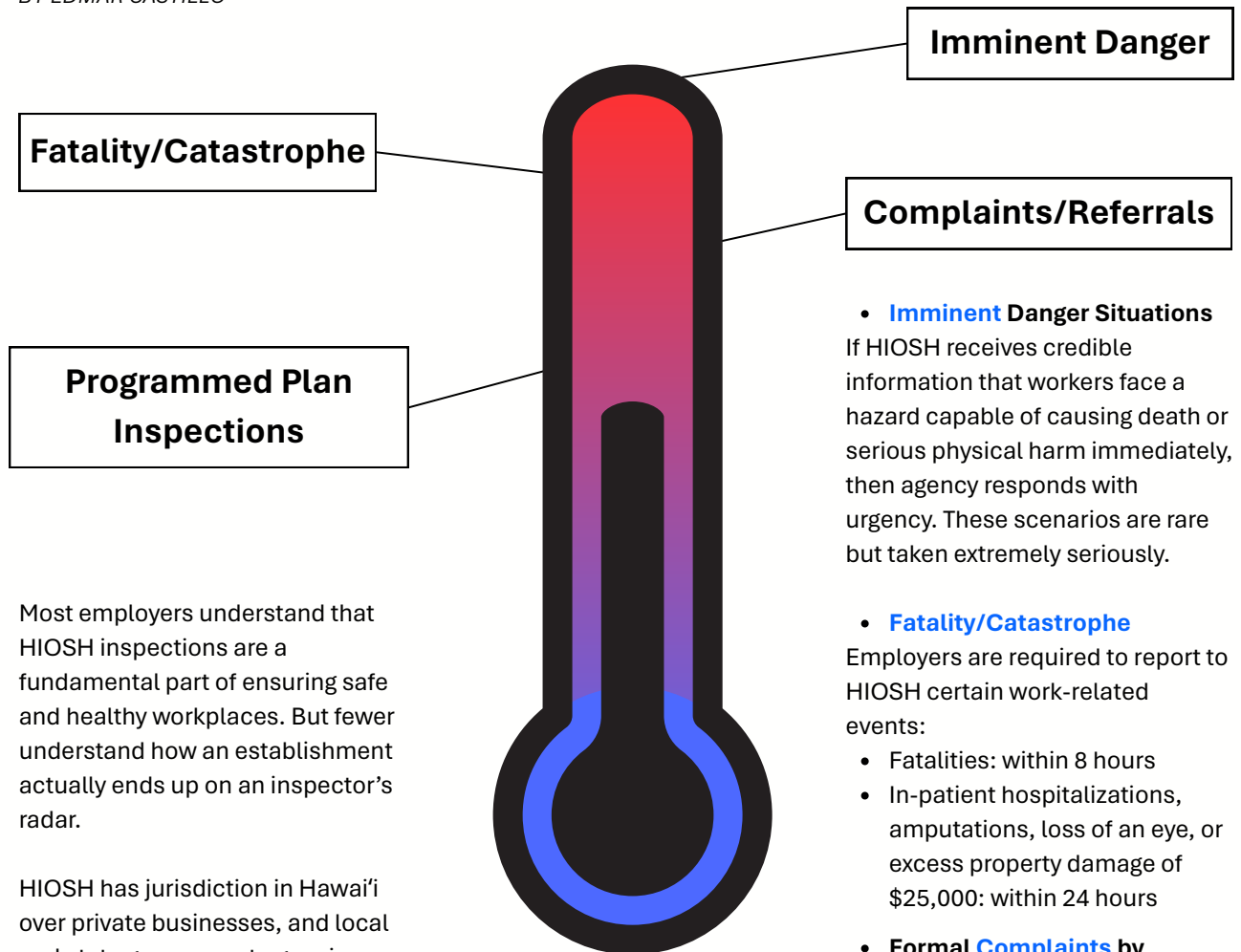
labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/cooperative-programs/alliances/



“WHAT TRIGGERED THIS INSPECTION?”

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

BY EDMAR CASTILLO



Most employers understand that HIOSH inspections are a fundamental part of ensuring safe and healthy workplaces. But fewer understand how an establishment actually ends up on an inspector’s radar.

HIOSH has jurisdiction in Hawai‘i over private businesses, and local and state government agencies. The agency seeks to focus its inspection resources on the most hazardous workplaces in a certain priority.

Unprogrammed vs. Programmed

Inspections are assigned based on two categories: programmed and unprogrammed inspections.

Unprogrammed inspections, which arise in response to particular events or information, take precedence over programmed inspections. The latter are assigned according to objective and neutral criteria.

1. Unprogrammed Inspections

Unprogrammed inspections arise from specific events or information that suggests an immediate or serious hazard. They represent the highest priority compared to programmed planned inspections, and employers should understand the triggers clearly.

In order of priority, these are the inspections that the agency seeks to focus its inspection resources:

Imminent Danger

- **Imminent Danger Situations**

If HIOSH receives credible information that workers face a hazard capable of causing death or serious physical harm immediately, then agency responds with urgency. These scenarios are rare but taken extremely seriously.

- **Fatality/Catastrophe**

Employers are required to report to HIOSH certain work-related events:

- Fatalities: within 8 hours
- In-patient hospitalizations, amputations, loss of an eye, or excess property damage of \$25,000: within 24 hours

- **Formal Complaints by Workers or Authorized Representatives**

A written, signed complaint describing the alleged hazards with reasonable cause often triggers an on-site inspection. Inspectors provide a complaint form alleging the complaint items.

Workers may request anonymity when they file a safety complaint with HIOSH.

- **Referrals from Other Agencies or Inspectors**

Referrals come from many sources such as other government agencies, law enforcement, medical professionals, or even other HIOSH staff.

2. Programmed Plan Inspections

Programmed Plan Inspections are preventative in nature. They are designed to target workplaces where data shows the greatest potential for serious injuries or illnesses, even if no incident has occurred.

HIOSH use multiple tools and programs to determine these targets:

- **Building Permit List**

Focusing on the transitory nature of construction jobsites and the fact that construction jobsites frequently involve more than one employer, inspections are focused on a list of construction jobsites.

- **Site-Specific Targeting (SST)**

For non-construction employers, HIOSH uses injury and illness data reported through the OSHA Injury Tracking Application (ITA) to identify establishments with specific DART Rate (Days Away, Restricted, or Transfer) patterns.

These inspections are proactive as they aim to prevent incidents before they occur.

- **National Emphasis Program (NEP)**

These are temporary programs that are designated by OSHA to focus the collective resources on particular hazards and high-hazard industries using inspection data, injury and illness data, and other available information sources.

- **Public-Sector**

Where Federal OSHA does not have jurisdiction regarding local and state government, HIOSH requires agencies to submit their injury and illness data directly to their office instead of the ITA.

Building Permit List

- Construction-Related Activities

Site-Specific Targeting (SST)

1. Non-construction workplaces with +20 employees
2. Collected from the employer's submission of OSHA Form 300A:
 - High DART Rates
 - Upward DART Rates
 - Low DART Rates
 - No submission

National Emphasis Program (NEP)

- Falls
- Warehousing and Distribution Center Operations
- Excavation and Trenching
- Combustible Dust
- Amputation
- Lead
- PSM Covered Chemical Facilities
- Respirable Crystalline Silica
- Heat Stress
- Hexavalent Chromium
- Primary Metal Industries

Public-Sector

- Annual Electronic Submission to HIOSH via dlir.hiosh.records@hawaii.gov of:
 - OSHA 300 Form,
 - OSHA 301 Form,
 - OSHA 300A Form

DOWNLOAD THE FACT SHEET

To download the handout, visit the:

labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/publications/fact-sheets/



HIOSH'S TOP 10

2 0 2 5

The following list highlights the occupational safety and health standards most frequently cited for serious violations by the Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) Division during fiscal year 2025, which spans from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025.

These citations represent standards where employers – in general industries and construction industries – were non compliant with regulatory requirements, resulting in conditions that posed significant risks to worker health and safety.

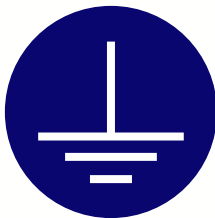
Download handout

To download this HIOSH Fact Sheet, visit:

[labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/
most-cited-standards/](https://labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/most-cited-standards/)



1.

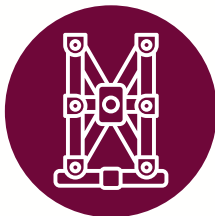


Electrical
1910.304(g)(5)
25 violations

1910.304(g)(5) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

Grounding path. The path to ground from circuits, equipment, and enclosures shall be permanent, continuous, and effective.

2.



Fall Protection
1926.501(b)(13)
21 violations

1926.501(b)(13) [refer to §12-110-50(a), HAR]

Residential construction. Each employee engaged in residential construction activities 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above lower levels shall be protected by guardrail systems, safety net system, or personal fall arrest system unless another provision in paragraph (b) of this section provides for an alternative fall protection measure. Exception: When the employer can demonstrate that it is infeasible or creates a greater hazard to use these systems, the employer shall develop and implement a fall protection plan which meets the requirements of paragraph (k) of § 1926.502.

Note: There is a presumption that it is feasible and will not create a greater hazard to implement at least one of the above-listed fall protection systems. Accordingly, the employer has the burden of establishing that it is appropriate to implement a fall protection plan which complies with § 1926.502(k) for a particular workplace situation, in lieu of implementing any of those systems.

3.

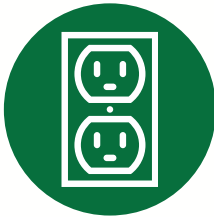


General Duty Clause
§12-60-2(a)(3)
20 violations

§12-60-2(a)(3), HAR

Every employer shall provide safe work places and practices by elimination or reduction of existing or potential hazards. Elimination of existing or potential hazards by design, process substitution, or other appropriate methods is preferred because it eliminates the need for further employee protection. When elimination is not feasible, reduction of existing or potential hazards to acceptable levels, using methods such as engineering or administrative controls, isolation, or guarding, shall be promptly used. When these methods are inadequate to reach acceptable levels, personal protective equipment shall be provided and used.

4.

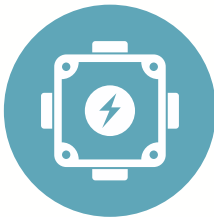


Electrical
1910.305(b)(2)(i)
18 violations

1910.305(b)(2)(i) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

All pull boxes, junction boxes, and fittings shall be provided with covers identified for the purpose. If metal covers are used, they shall be grounded. In completed installations, each outlet box shall have a cover, faceplate, or fixture canopy. Covers of outlet boxes having holes through which flexible cord pendants pass shall be provided with bushings designed for the purpose or shall have smooth, well-rounded surfaces on which the cords may bear.

5.

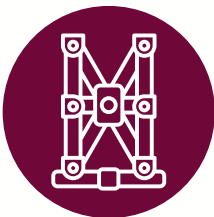


Electrical
1910.305(b)(1)(ii)
17 violations

1910.305(b)(1)(ii) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

Unused openings in cabinets, boxes, and fittings shall be effectively closed.

6.



Fall Protection
1910.28(b)(1)(i)
13 violations

1910.28(b)(1)(i) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

Except as provided elsewhere in this section, the employer must ensure that each employee on a walking-working surface with an unprotected side or edge that is 4 feet (1.2 m) or more above a lower level is protected from falling by one or more of the following: Guardrail systems; Safety net systems; or Personal fall protection systems, such as personal fall arrest, travel restraint, or positioning systems.

7.



Electrical
1910.303(b)(2)
11 violations

1910.303(b)(2) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

Installation and use. Listed or labeled equipment shall be installed and used in accordance with any instructions included in the listing or labeling.

8.



Ladder
1926.1053(b)(1)
11 violations

1926.1053(b)(1) [refer to §12-110-50(a), HAR]

When portable ladders are used for access to an upper landing surface, the ladder side rails shall extend at least 3 feet (.9 m) above the upper landing surface to which the ladder is used to gain access; or, when such an extension is not possible because of the ladder's length, then the ladder shall be secured at its top to a rigid support that will not deflect, and a grasping device, such as a grabrail, shall be provided to assist employees in mounting and dismounting the ladder. In no case shall the extension be such that ladder deflection under a load would, by itself, cause the ladder to slip off its support.

9.



Drenching
1910.151(c)
10 violations

1910.151(c) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

Where the eyes or body of any person may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, suitable facilities for quick drenching or flushing of the eyes and body shall be provided within the work area for immediate emergency use.

10.



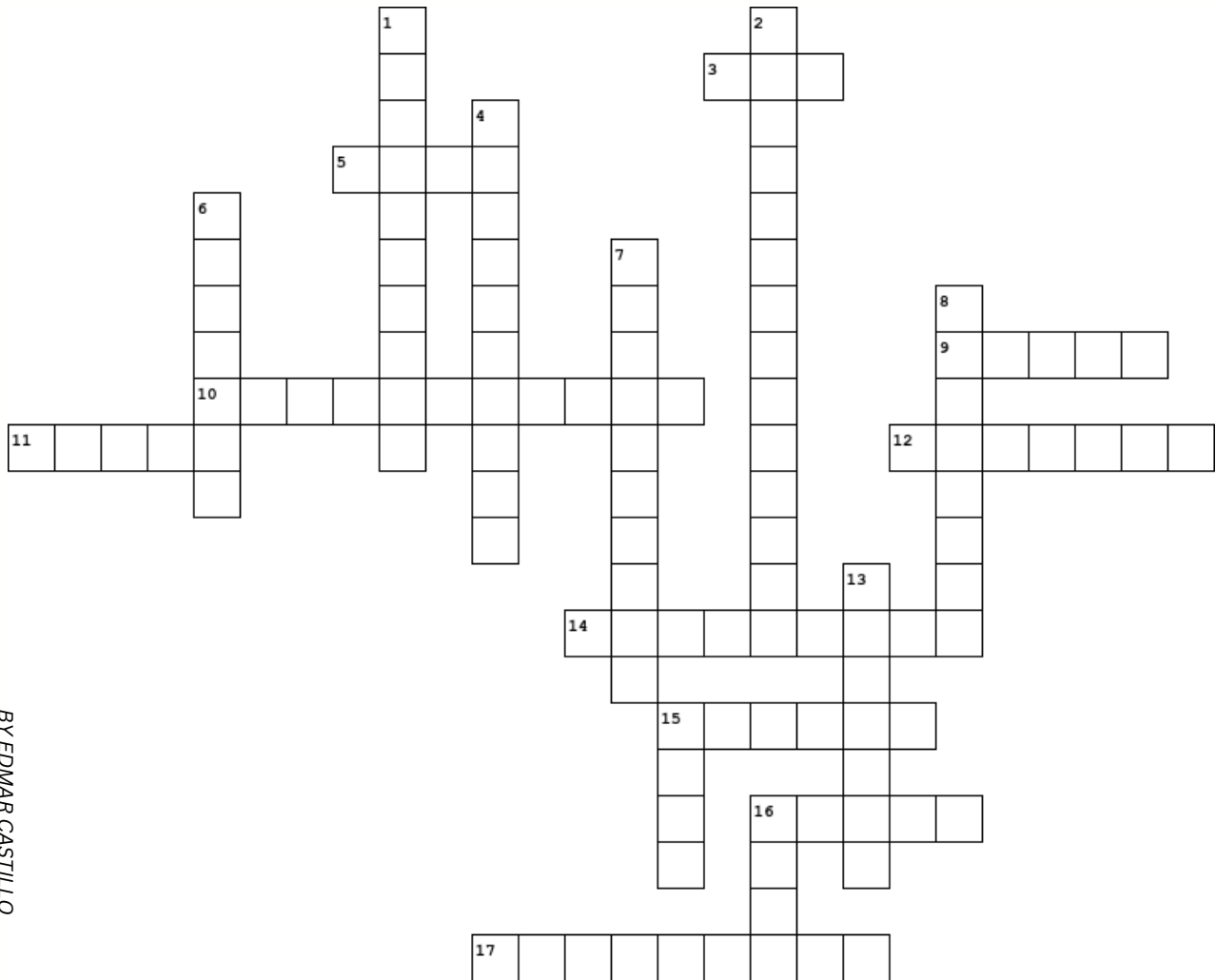
Respirator
1910.134(f)(2)
8 violations

1910.134(f)(2) [refer to §12-60-50(a), HAR]

The employer shall ensure that an employee using a tight-fitting facepiece respirator is fit tested prior to initial use of the respirator, whenever a different respirator facepiece (size, style, model or make) is used, and at least annually thereafter.

Crossword Puzzle

HIOSH Recordkeeping



BY EDMAR CASTILLO

ACROSS

3. Safety in numbers? Past this one, you file records.
5. Number of years before the log can rest
9. Hours on the clock before HIOSH expects your fatality report.
10. Not awake, but still on the log
11. Blame game HIOSH says you don't play when you record an injury.
12. Case label when names withheld
14. Not mandatory, not logged
15. Side trip, not recordable
16. Aid Initial care, not recordable (2 words)
17. Chart that listens instead of looks — it measures hearing shifts.

DOWN

1. Exit unrelated to injury
2. Medical advice, logged regardless
4. Held back from full function
6. Drive to work, not to the log
7. Reportable removal
8. Shortest month, longest deadline
13. Start of the year, start of submissions
15. Calendar entries for absences
16. Business hours you've got to provide to comply

Upcoming Events

Recordkeeping Workshops 8 - 12PM HST @ 830 Punchbowl St #427, Honolulu, HI 96813

Become informed with a complimentary, in-person class on OSHA Recordkeeping. This practical session is designed for business owners, HR professionals, and safety managers seeking to ensure their workplace meets all recordkeeping requirements.

- Tuesday, January 6, 2026
- Friday, January 16, 2026
- Tuesday, January 20, 2026
- Thursday, January 22, 2026
- Monday, January 26, 2026
- Thursday, January 29, 2026

Advance online registration is required to secure your seat. One form per person. Spaces are limited, and walk-ins cannot be accommodated, so register now.



labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/hiosh-news/2026records/

ANSWER

